



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana
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IM Weekly Highlights



- Bob McWilliams announced his resignation as Chair of the IM Technical Committee. The IM is grateful to Bob for his years of dedication to the project. We wish him the best in his future endeavors.
- T-1 mapping and configuration for the PSIC-funded microwave project from the Lewis and Clark LEC to the Timberline Site in Gallatin County is complete.
- The IM received NEPA approval from Homeland Security/FEMA for the new Fox Creek tower located in Richland County.

Free Digital Mobile Radios for Montana EMS Services

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

A unique opportunity for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies is being offered as a result of collaboration with the Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Systems Section, the Montana Hospital Preparedness Program, MT Dept. of Public Health & Human Services. EMS agencies can both participate in training AND upgrade their communications capability with a free digital P-25 mobile radio.

If 50% of the members of an EMS organization complete the online training course, *Mutual Aid for EMS*, the agency qualifies for a FREE digital Motorola XT2500 mobile radio with rear control and encryption. Installation and maintenance costs will be the responsibility of the agency receiving the radio. Forty radios are available at this time.

The course was developed to provide EMS responders with basic information about the need for mutual aid agreements, protections offered by those agreements and the responsibilities of participants in a mutual aid response. The course also covers the National Incident Management

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System (NIMS) emphasis on mutual aid and assistance.

This course is available online through LearningZen, a learning management system that can provide course completion and continuing education certificates. EMS staffers may take the course from their homes, offices or station quarters at their own pace. Visit <https://mtemergencycare.learningzen.com> to set up a LearningZen account. The *Mutual Aid for EMS* course does not take much time to complete, and course completion certificates may be printed when students finish the course.

When at least 50% of an EMS agency's members have taken the course, the agency may submit documentation to receive its free radio. The application is available at this link: http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/ems/emsnews/news_docs/P25_radio_grant.pdf. The application, along with copies of LearningZen course completion certificates should be returned to Kevin Fitzgerald, EMS & Trauma Systems Section, P.O. Box 202951, Helena, MT 59620 or electronically as an attachment to kfitzgerald@mt.gov. Questions? E-mail or call Kevin at 406-444-6098, Dayle Perrin, dperrin@mt.gov 406-444-3898 or Larry Ross, lross@mt.gov, 406-444-0931.

Funding for this project is made available through the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), Department of Health and Human Services.

For more information, please visit: http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/ems/emsnews/radio_grant.html.

Tri-County Consortia Proposes Bylaws Changes

By Dan Sullivan dsullivan@mt.gov

The Tri-County Consortium met at the Lewis and Clark County LEC on Tues., Nov. 30. A primary agenda topic was the expansion of Tri-County membership to include the fire service with representation from the local Fire Council. Bob Drake from Tri-Lakes Volunteer Fire was on hand and encouraged fire service participation in the consortium. Bob told the group that Tri-Lakes Volunteer Fire has used the Lewis and Clark trunked communications system since 2004 and, in Bob's words "We'll never go back".

Bill Fleiner, Broadwater County DES,

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recommended that an elected official, such as a County Commissioner or Sheriff, represent the consortium on the board of IM Project Directors on a rotating basis. The consortium's executive committee will meet separately to discuss how to rotate the position between elected officials. Bylaws will be amended accordingly.

Members also discussed hiring a half-time communications planner to develop communications plans for consortium members. The jurisdiction-based plans would include radio equipment instructions, code plugs and fleet mapping. The part-time position would be funded from the four counties and administratively attached to Lewis and Clark County. Broadwater County would be the fiscal agent.

In addition, the group reviewed the operational status of communications sites in the four-county area including the Boulder Hill, Cominco, Knob Hill, Limestone, MacDonald Pass and XL Heights sites. The infrastructure at Limestone is in place; Boulder Hill will be completed this fiscal year; Cominco, Knob Hill and MacDonald Pass are up and running. The last construction item at the XL Heights site (before it becomes fully operational) are louvers on the generator portion of the shelter.

The Tri-County Consortium will meet in January at a date, time and location to be announced. The Executive Committee will meet on Dec. 28.

Big Sky 11 Meeting Educational

By Dan Sullivan dsullivan@mt.gov

The Big Sky 11 Consortium met Dec. 2 in Billings with Sheriff Floyd Fisher, Golden Valley County, reporting on the most recent IM Project Director's (IMPD) meeting and IM funding concerns. Shortfalls remain in available administration funding for 2011 that could seriously impair the project. This issue will be a primary topic at the next IMPD meeting.

Sheriff Fisher also discussed the upcoming availability of IM grant funds for jurisdictions needing narrowband repeaters and base stations. Priority will be given to jurisdictions that have not previously benefitted from IM support. Dan Sullivan, PSSB, who was attending via conference call, said he would look into the details of this and report back to the group. The group also discussed the status of the second master controller that is planned to be housed at the Richland County Law Enforcement Center in Sidney.

Yellowstone County Sheriff-Elect Mike Linder gave the technical committee report. The Greeno

site is complete with generator startup on Dec. 1. The Coburn site has experienced some winter weather construction timing issues, but is nearing completion. An RFP for the Shane Ridge site is scheduled to be issued early next year. Mike also discussed options for the PSIC-funded Strategic Technology Reserve (STR) purchase for equipment that can be rapidly deployed in the event of a catastrophic incident. Options include purchasing a mobile tower/trailer or a 4-wheel drive vehicle with a pop-up tower or monopole. It also was noted that many of rural counties already have mobile repeaters that can be deployed quickly in an emergency. Anne Kindness, Communication Center Manager, reported that the City of Billings is nearing completion of its portable radio replacement deployment.

The next meeting of the Big Sky Consortium is set for Thurs., Jan. 27, 2011. Anne will send a reminder in advance of the next meeting. Attendance is important because it is time to elect new consortium officers.

Upcoming Meetings

• Sun-Wed., Dec. 5-8

4th Canadian Public Safety Interoperability Workshop
A CITIG National Forum "From Action to Results"
Victoria, BC • www.cacp.ca
The Fairmont Empress, 721 Government Street

• Thurs., Dec. 9

Central Montana Consortium (CMICC)
Great Falls • 10:00 am
Disaster & Emergency Services Office
521 1st St. NW

• Thurs., Dec. 16

I-15/90 Corridor Consortium
Butte • 10:00 am – noon
Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St.

• Mon., Dec. 20

IM Technical Committee (IMTC)
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
MACo Offices, 2715 Skyway Dr.

• Mon., Jan. 3 (Please note change)

IM Finance Committee (IMFC)
Helena • 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.

• Mon., Jan. 3 (Please note change)

IM Governance Committee (IMGC)
Helena • 1:00 - 5:00 pm
Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.

• Tues., Jan. 4 (Please note change)

IM Project Directors Meeting (IMPD)
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 2715 Skyway Dr.